

Nickelodeon creates Avatar Studios to create new Avatar, Legend of Korra content



ViacomCBS has announced a new studio based entirely around *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and *The Legend of Korra*.

Avatar Studios will create “original content spanning animated series and movies,” according to a press release. *Avatar* and *Korra* original creators, Michael DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko, are joining Nickelodeon as co-chief creative officers of Avatar Studios. The first project is an animated theatrical title set to begin production soon. More information will be announced soon, according to the company.

Having exclusive *Avatar* and *Korra* content is pretty key for Nickelodeon and ViacomCBS’ new streaming service, Paramount Plus. While the company’s business strategy is to license out a number of its shows and films on a non-exclusive basis, by the time *Avatar* and *The Legend of Korra* returned to Netflix, subscribers may have associated the show specifically with the streaming platform. The show became the most watched title on

Netflix around May 22nd, when it returned to Netflix. The series was also previously available on Amazon Prime Video.

Having those licensing agreements is financially beneficial to ViacomCBS right now, according to comments CEO Bob Bakish has made on previous earnings calls. Some of Netflix's most watched shows in the US remain ViacomCBS titles, including *Criminal Minds*, *Shameless*, *NCIS*, and *Schitt's Creek*. In order to bring people in and get them to subscribe, however, Paramount Plus needs its own exclusives. This is where having a new *Avatar* series could ultimately be very beneficial.

Paramount Plus is ViacomCBS's rebranded entry into the streaming space. It will launch on March 4th. After Viacom and CBS merged again in 2019, the unified company set out to find a way to use its entire breadth of programming and franchises to make a true competitor to Netflix, Amazon, HBO Max, and Disney's empire (Disney Plus and Hulu). The new streaming service will have more than 30,000 TV episodes and films from across its various brands, including BET, CBS, Comedy Central, MTV, Nickelodeon, and Paramount Pictures, alongside some aspect of live sports and news.

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